

From: Jim Robertson
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 11/23/01 9:09am
Subject: Proposed microsoft settlement

I've been told that the Department of Justice is seeking public comment on its proposed settlement with Microsoft. Enclosed is a copy of a letter I sent to the California Department of Justice, asking it to persevere in its pressure for a more meaningful punishment of the company's predatory business practices.

I'm a long time Macintosh user with a long memory of the often-strained relationship between Microsoft and Apple. Last year, I was encouraged that the Federal Government finally had the wisdom and courage to curtail Microsoft's predatory business practices. Unfortunately, the proposed settlement does NOTHING to accomplish this, and the contempt with which Microsoft regards those who would attempt to limit its monopoly is evidenced by Microsoft's marketing of Windows XP. It should not be necessary to detail these new transgressions, but the fact that settlement talks proceed in the face of this conduct makes it clear that those who ought to have control don't care, don't understand, have been bought off, or are overwhelmed by the company's propaganda. To wit:

1. XP will refuse to run if a user makes more than some unknown number of modifications to the hardware in his/her system, and cannot be resurrected without a call to Microsoft. Imagine a person working on deadline with his laptop hundreds of miles away from his home office and his installation CDs, who decides he needs more RAM to finish a project. He installs the RAM and his computer becomes non-functional.

2. XP disables the multimedia applications that have become default standards in favor of its own file formats. Some of these are products of other companies (QuickTime, Flash, Real Audio), and some are non-proprietary standards (mp3).

Even more ludicrous is the proposed settlement of other private lawsuits which seems to COMPEL microsoft to strengthen its grip on one market it does not yet control, education. Is Br'er Rabbit working successfully for Microsoft?

I know that the California Department of Justice is seeking more meaningful penalties. I applaud that position and beg you to hold fast to it.

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